



UNITED STATES SENATOR ★ SERVING THE CITIZENS OF IDAHO

LARRY CRAIG

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NEWS RELEASE

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SENATE HEARS IDAHO WILDERNESS BILLS

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Senate got its first look at two different bills to designate additional wilderness in Idaho. Senator Larry Craig chaired the hearing which looked at the Owyhee Initiative, sponsored by Senator Mike Crapo, and the Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act (CIEDRA), sponsored by Rep. Mike Simpson.

The hearing was held in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee’s Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests. Craig, who has not taken a position on either bill yet, emphasized his commitment to giving each bill fair and open consideration in the Senate, “I have given these bills a fair and open hearing. The result is that the public had a chance to vet important land use policy, and it was done in a timely manner. As with any major compromise, there are always groups that will oppose either on philosophical grounds or because of a lack of inclusion. It is very important to me that all have their voices heard and that is what I have tried to do today.”

Craig concluded the hearing with, “I can tell these bills have been very carefully crafted and have achieved a very delicate balance amongst the negotiating parties, who range from public land users to conservationists to communities. My colleagues and those who have been part of these carefully crafted agreements and the collaborative processes deserve considerable respect.

“These carefully negotiated agreements changed adversaries to allies. To ensure those relationships remain whole, we need to build in assurances to see that the obligations are met and trust is maintained. Only after that can I agree that this is truly a balanced agreement, and wilderness can be designated.

“We have heard a myriad of concerns, and I will approach the sponsors to see if any further compromise can be reached on some of these sensitive areas. Therefore, I need time to digest what I have learned here today and work with the bill sponsors and the committee to find reasonable ways to answer our constituents’ questions and concerns.”